

Message Text

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ACTION DLOS-06

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 IO-13 ISO-00 FEA-01 ACDA-07 AGRE-00
AID-05 CEA-01 CEQ-01 CG-00 CIAE-00 CIEP-01 COME-00
DODE-00 DOTE-00 EB-07 EPA-01 ERDA-05 FMC-01 TRSE-00
H-01 INR-07 INT-05 JUSE-00 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 NSF-01
OES-06 OMB-01 PA-01 PM-04 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06
SAL-01 /119 W

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R 190510Z JAN 77
FM AMEMBASSY MUSCAT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2857
INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
JYEMBASSY DOHA 259
USMISSION GENEVA
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY MANAMA
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

C O N F I D E N T I A L MUSCAT 0107

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PLOS
SUBJECT: LOS: INTERSESSIONAL MEETING AND OMANI POSITION

REF: (A) STATE 003591 (B) STATE 009443

1. SUMMARY: OMAN HAS NO PLANS YET TO ATTEND EVENSEN MEETING IN GENEVA. WE OUTLINED TALKING POINTS REF (B) TO FOREIGN MINISTRY UNDERSECRETARY, WHO TOOK OCCASION REITERATE OMANI POSOTIONS WHICH CONTRARY TO OURS IN SEVERAL IMPORTANT RESPECTS. END SUMMARY.

2. DCM CALLED JAN 15 ON YUSUF AL ALAWI, UNDERSECRETARY OF FOREIGN MINISTRY, TO COVER POINTS IN BOTH REFTELS.

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3. CONCERNING EVENSEN MEETING IN GENEVA, AL ALAWI SAID OMAN HAD NOT YET RECEIVED INVITATON AND KNEW NOTHING OF MEETING, AND SO HAD NO PLANS AS YET TO SEND ANYONE. IF OMAN DOES SEND SOMEONE, HE ADDED, IT WILL PROBABLY BE OMANI AMBASSADOR IN PARIS, WHO HAS WORKED ON LOS MATTER IN PAST. DCM OUTLINED DATES AND PURPOSE OF EVENSEN MEETING FOR AL ALAWI'S INFORMATION.

4. CONCERNING TALKING POINTS REF (B), DCM STRESSED (1) NEED FOR SYSTEM OF INSURED ACCESS FOR ALL STATES IN DEEP SEABED MINING, (2) CHARACTER OF ECONOMIC ZONE AS PART OF HIGH SEAS, (3) IMPORTANCE OF BALANCING INTERESTS IN REGIME FOR SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH. AL ALAWI HAD LITTLE TO SAY ON DEEP SEABED MINING EXCEPT TO NOTE ISSUE OF INTERNATIONAL AUTHORITY IS DEEMED IMPORTANT TO DEVELOPING STATES, AND HE IMPLIES OMAN SUPPORTS THEIR VIEW. HE DID NOT COMMENT EXPLICITLY ON QUESTION OF ASURED ACCESS. ON ECONOMIC ZONE, HE AT FIRST ACKNOWLEDGED THAT IT SHOULD BE CONSIDERED HIGH SEAS FOR NAVIGATION PURPOSES, THEN BACKTRACKED SAYING COASTAL STATE MUST HAVE RIGHT PROTECT ECONOMIC INSTALLATIONS IN THAT ZONE FROM ANY NAVIGATIONAL PRACTICES IT DEEMS HAZARDOUS. HE TOOK SIMILAR VIEW ON SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH, STRESSING THAT COASTAL STATE MUST BE ALLOWED HALT ANY RESEARCH IT VIEWS AS RISKING SAFETY OF ECONOMIC INSTALLATIONS. HE ADDED, HOWEVER, THAT OMAN WILL TO "LEAVE SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH TO THE INDUSTRIAL SAATES".

5. THIS DISCUSSION LED AL ALAWI TO RAISE ISSUE OF INNOCENT PASSAGE VERSUS FREE TRANSIT THROUGH STRAITS, OMAN'S PERENNIAL PREOCCUPATION IN LOS FIELD. TAKING OUT MAP SHOWING MAIN SEA ROUTE THROUGH STRAITS OF HORMUZ BETWEEN MUSANDAM HEADLAND AND OMANI-OWNED AS-SALAMAH ISLAND, HE ASKED HOW OMAN COULD BE INDIFFERENT TO NAVIGATION OF SUCH VOLUME WITHIN FEW MILES OF OMANI COAST. HE NOTED OMAN MAY SOON SET UP OIL RIGS NEARBY, AND WHILE ECONOMIC ZONE AND STRAITS REGIME ARE SEPARATE LOS TOPICS HE SEEMED TO CONSIDER THIS CONFIDENTIAL

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AS SUPPORTING OMANI POSITION IN BOTH FIELDSUF I.E. THAT COASTAL STATE MUSCT PROTECT ECONOMIC ZONE AND THAT FREE TRANSIT THROUGH STRAITS IS UNACCEPTABLE DOCTRINE. HE AND DCM THEN HAD INCONCLUSIVE DISCUSSION OF STRAITS QUESTION, LATTER TRYING PARTICULARLY GET ACROSS THAT FREE TRANSIT IS IN PRESENT DRAFT TEXT AND IS CLOSEST THING TO UNIVERSALLY AGREED POSITION. THIS MADE NO VISIBLE DENT IN AL ALAWI'S VIEWPOINT.

7. COMMENTS: LOS IS ONE OF THE FEW INTERNATIONAL ISSUES WHERE USG AND OMANGOV FIND THEMSELVES IN ADVERSARY POSITIONS. OMANI VIEW ON STRAITS IS STRONGLY HELD. AL ALAWI PERSONALLY APPEARS AS ONE OF OMANGOV'S CHIEF HAWKS ON THE ISSUE.

8. IN BROADEST CONTEXT, MOTIVATION FOR OMANI POSITION IS OBVIOUSLY THAT COUNTRY'S LOCATION VIS-A-VIS STRAITS OF HORMUZ IS VIRTUALLY ITS ONLY CLAIM TO FAME IN INTERNATIONAL ARENA. ENERGETIC OFFICIALS LIKE AL ALAWI ARE RELUCTANT DILUTE THIS GEOPOLITICAL ADVANTAGE BY ALLOWING FREE PASSAGE. IF OMAN SAW LITTLE SUPPORT FOR ITS POSITION FROM OTHER GOVERNMENTS, IT

WOULD PROBABLY GIVE IN, SO AS NOT TO BE OBSTACLE TO INTERNATIONAL
TREATY. HOWEVER, AL ALAWI WAS QUICK TO REMARK TO DCM THAT
OMAN CONSIDERS ITSELF BY NO MEANS ALONE.
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